

He has traveled the world. He has gotten countries to move a lot further than I think any of us thought was possible. I want to congratulate our former colleague for the work he has done on the climate issues. I want to also acknowledge Assistant Secretary Monica Medina, who worked tirelessly during COP27 in order to get results.

We are certainly not satisfied with everything that happened at COP27. Let me make that clear. There were disappointments. We would like to have seen an increase in the emissions targets, much more than have been made. We have to do better. They only made modest progress on mitigation. But important progress was made in forest protection. So we did make progress, and we brought the international community together in order to recognize that this is a global problem.

I am so proud that the U.S. leadership is back on the international scene, leading the international community to do what we need to do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert the most severe consequences of climate change.

With that, I would yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert Phillip Storch, of the District of Columbia, to be Inspector General, Department of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes for debate, equally divided.

Mr. CARDIN. I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTE ON STORCH NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Storch nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 367 Ex.]

#### YEAS—92

Baldwin	Blunt	Cantwell
Barrasso	Booker	Capito
Bennet	Boozman	Cardin
Blackburn	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Burr	Casey

Cassidy	Kennedy	Rosen
Collins	King	Rounds
Coons	Klobuchar	Rubio
Cornyn	Lankford	Sanders
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Schatz
Cramer	Lee	Schumer
Crapo	Lujan	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Daines	Manchin	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Shelby
Durbin	Marshall	Sinema
Ernst	McConnell	Smith
Feinstein	Menendez	Stabenow
Fischer	Merkley	Sullivan
Gillibrand	Moran	Tester
Graham	Murkowski	Thune
Grassley	Murphy	Tillis
Hassan	Murray	Tuberville
Heinrich	Ossoff	Van Hollen
Hickenlooper	Padilla	Warner
Hirono	Paul	Warren
Hooven	Peters	Whitehouse
Inhofe	Portman	Wicker
Johnson	Reed	Wyden
Kaine	Risch	Young
Kelly	Romney	

#### NAYS—3

Braun	Cotton	Hawley
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#### NOT VOTING—5

Hagerty	Sasse	Warnock
Hyde-Smith	Toomey	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be notified immediately of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Virginia.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KAIN. Mr. President, I rise to offer a unanimous consent request for the approval of two important nominees to ambassadorial positions that have passed through the Foreign Relations Committee, and the first that I want to offer deals with seeking to advance the nomination of William H. Duncan for the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador.

I appreciate that my colleagues—two colleagues from the Republican side—are here on the floor to respond to these requests.

Mr. Duncan is a 30-year veteran of the career Foreign Service. He has experience serving throughout the Western Hemisphere region: El Salvador; Monterrey, Mexico; Mexico City; Asuncion; Madrid; Bogota; and Matamoros. He has also served domestically in the Offices of Andean Affairs, Mexican Affairs, and Central American Affairs. He has had a tour in Baghdad and in the State Department Operations Center.

I say this not to bore everybody with a long recitation, but because Mr. Duncan has had a pretty incredible career. And it is near impossible to imagine a career more fit to purpose and a nominee better suited to serve an enormous and unique challenge that the United States faces today in El Salvador.

The United States faces a very tough question in El Salvador right now, and that is the current President of El Salvador, President Bukele. He is locally very, very popular, but he has utilized his popularity for malfeasance. He has exploited weak local institutions to begin to undermine civilian society and build up a security state. He has

imprisoned around 50,000 of his own citizens since just March of this year and curtailed the civil right of the remainder.

Members of Bukele's party have openly meddled directly in U.S. legislative elections.

Experts increasingly doubt the country's ability to pay nearly \$800 million in Eurobond payments that it owes coming up in February. A default could spur a fresh round of migration northward from El Salvador to Mexico and the United States.

My friends across the aisle frequently—and, I think, appropriately—cite migration as a top foreign policy challenge, and they have got a point. The size and scope of this crisis, compounded by El Salvador and President Bukele's actions, and the humanitarian impact on the entire region and our country are worsening by the day. I agree that the issue needs much, much more attention, and El Salvador is right on the frontline of this crisis.

I lived in Honduras, very near the Salvadoran border in 1980 and 1981. It was a challenge then. It is a challenge now. No country can, on its own, confront the myriad of challenges facing El Salvador today, transnational organized crime being one of them.

So we have to work together to strengthen the rule of law in El Salvador. That is essential if we are going to discourage irregular migration. Without the rule of law, El Salvador will never have the economic growth that it needs nor will it be able to prevent human rights abuses and attacks on civil liberties, reduce gender-based violence, or defeat the threat from criminal gangs, all drivers of irregular migration.

Addressing these drivers and other serious U.S. policy concerns requires engagement at the highest level by experienced, incredible interlocutors, such as Mr. Duncan. We urgently need a Senate-confirmed Ambassador to engage President Bukele in El Salvador and civil society, including the courageous human rights activists, on these issues.

As Mr. Duncan noted in his testimony in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the relationship between the United States and El Salvador has been exceptionally close for more than 40 years, despite many, many challenging issues. Through a horrific civil war, a fraught peace process, and into today's challenges, such as fighting transnational organized crime, the United States has worked cooperatively with El Salvador in everything we can and disagreed firmly and constructively when we needed to.

It is worth noting that over these years, many Salvadorans have become our fellow citizens, including right here in the DMV, through processes such as TPS status. Two and a half million Salvadorans live in the United States. They proudly contribute to our national fabric through their creativity and work ethic and to El Salvador

through billions of dollars in remittances every year.

Now, I have been speaking a bit. One word you haven't heard me mention at all is Cuba. I have a feeling, based on an earlier iteration of this, that my colleague will cite concerns about the administration's challenges with Cuba as a reason for this hold, and I just ask the question: What does this have to do with El Salvador?

There are always differences of opinions within the Senate on every administration's policies on Latin America and especially Cuba—I get that—even, at times, strong opposition. And I have raised opposition about issues with respect to Cuba with this administration and others.

We all are free to offer bills and amendments dealing with the many challenges in Cuba, but Mr. Duncan was nominated for this role in an entirely different country, El Salvador, in February 2022. His Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing was in August. He has been pending consideration by the full Senate since then, as the human rights situation in El Salvador has been worsening. Let's get our Ambassador out onto the field and put him to work.

And so with that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 1106, William H. Duncan, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately informed of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Reserving the right to object, first, I want to thank my colleague from Virginia for coming down to the floor and bringing up the issue of U.S. foreign policy toward the Western Hemisphere. I agree with my colleague that U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America is of the utmost importance and that the Ambassadors we send into Latin America must advocate for the right policies.

Sadly, as both Vice President and President, Joe Biden has had a policy of appeasement toward Latin America dictators. President Biden has given operational control of the U.S. southern border to criminal cartels that work with narcostates like Venezuela and has shown that there are no consequences for crossing the U.S. border illegally.

He removed FARC from the list of foreign terrorist organizations, which I cannot understand why he would do that. He didn't invite Juan Guaido to the Summit of the Americas, even though the United States recognizes him as a legitimate interim President of Venezuela.

He eased sanctions on the illegitimate regimes in Cuba and Venezuela, while getting nothing in return to stop the oppression of the innocent people in these countries.

Biden's policy of appeasement toward Latin America dictators has done nothing to help the Cuban and Venezuelan people. I believe his actions have made our hemisphere more dangerous and more dangerous for the people who live in these countries. While President Biden doesn't stand up to Castro, Diaz-Canel, and Maduro, we are left with a destabilized hemisphere that is less peaceful and puts our national security at greater risk and hurts the citizens of these countries. These are murderers, illegitimate dictators. Appeasement is the worst move imaginable.

Iran, Russia, and communist China love it when Biden is nice to their friends in Latin America.

And as any active observer of Latin America knows, the countries in the region are incredibly interconnected. Policy toward Cuba affects policy toward everywhere else in the region. And as we see leftwing, socialist candidates rise in the region, like Gustavo Petro in Colombia, it only gives further reasoning for why the United States must strongly project our values of stability, democracy, and anti-communism.

Joe Biden has the power to join the Cuban people to call for the Cuban Communist Party to change. Where is he? Aside from a couple of statements he made last year, President Biden has not taken one action to support the Cuban people in their fight for freedom. He has done nothing to provide them with internet connections. He talked about it but didn't do it. He has done nothing to support the democracy movement on the island. He talks about it but hasn't done it. Instead, he and his administration have bowed to the demands of Cuba's murderous regime and have chosen not to stand for democracy and human rights.

The President couldn't even be bothered to speak about the 1-year anniversary of the July 11 historic and peaceful demonstrations in Cuba.

It is time for President Biden to stand up. He must call for the immediate release of the hundreds—hundreds—of pro-democracy activists, including children as young as 14 years old, that the regime has unjustly detained and subjected to physical and psychological torture.

President Biden's policies toward Latin America have diminished our influence in the region, and the people have seen their calls for freedom abandoned. It is essential to the national security of the United States, as well as our efforts to support freedom, democracy, and human rights, that President Biden reverses these foolish actions and not allow totalitarian dictatorships in our hemisphere to go unchecked.

We can never bow to dictators—never. It is time for Biden to lead and

oppose these genocidal dictators and support human rights. Until he does, I am not going to allow these nominations to go forward.

And I don't disagree with anything that my colleague from Virginia said, as far as that there are different ways that you can do foreign policy in Latin America. But not to be willing to just make a statement that these poor people in Cuba ought to be released is just unbelievable to me.

So, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, let me respond, and I will soften my request toward my colleague after I briefly respond.

My response is this: I don't see the logic. Cuba is not El Salvador. I listened to my colleague's comments, and I heard him talk about Cuba, and I talked to him about Venezuela. I didn't hear him say one word about El Salvador or one word about William H. Duncan.

These are not the same countries. It is not like they all look alike. They are different countries.

Now, we don't want them to be alike. That is true. We don't want them to be alike, and the danger we have—and I will have a request for the Senator from Florida in a second. The danger we have is, if we send El Salvador a sign of disrespect by not sending them an Ambassador, the dangerous tendency of the current President Bukele becoming more and more authoritarian could move El Salvador into a position where they are more and more like Cuba, and I don't think any of us want that to happen.

And so I would render a softer version of my request to my colleague from Florida and, instead of asking unanimous consent, that we just have a UC vote on this.

I would soften it and ask unanimous consent that, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, the Senate consider this nomination: Calendar No. 1106, William H. Duncan, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service; and that the Senate vote on the nomination, offering to all the opportunity to vote no, if that is their choice, without intervening action or debate; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with the President notified immediately of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. As soon as President Biden puts out a statement that all the peaceful protesters in Cuba should be immediately released, I will not object.

But until he does, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I have a second UC request.